



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
September 14th, 2011**

Welcome and Approval of June Meeting Summary Minutes:

Charlie Crawford, Vice- Chair, convened the meeting. Mary Miers, wife of Commissioner John Miers, amended the minutes to reflect that John passed away on June 2, 2011 from a brain tumor. Jackie Simon, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the minutes with the amendments. Seth Morgan, Commissioner, seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the June Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved with the amendments.

Design Feedback from the Commission on the Proposed Disability Resource Center (DRC) at the New Silver Spring Public Library ~ Rita Gale and Susanne Churchill, Montgomery County Public Libraries

The new Silver Spring Public Library will be a six story building at the corner of Wayne and Fenton. Construction is set to begin summer, 2012. The Metro's Purple Line will be housed in the first two floors. The library will be housed on floors three, four and five.

There are two entrances to the library floor in the new Silver Spring Library Building. One is on the Wayne Avenue side of the building, which has elevators on the ground floor that will take you to the third floor. The other entrance is off of Fenton Street in a lobby building that has an elevator, escalator and retail space for a coffee bar. If you enter on Fenton Street you will be able to take either the escalator or elevator directly to the third floor. The entry level of the library is on the third floor. The services available on that floor include the Disability Resource Center (DRC), checkout and returns, meeting rooms and the teen print/non-print collection as well as a special MAC and PC lab for teens to use.

When you get off the elevator on the third floor, Wayne Avenue side, you will make a right and walk about 14 feet and then make a left to walk past the meeting room on the left to get to the entry doorway to the library. It's about 35 feet from the point where you turn left until you reach the doors into the library itself. Once through the doors and the RFID security gates, you will be entering a large lobby like area which will probably have some self checkout machines, an information desk and displays. One end of the circulation desk is about 5-8 feet to your right as you enter. If you were to walk straight forward from the entry door about 25 feet and then turn right and walk past the circulation desk on the right (the desk is about 20 feet long) and then another 15 feet, you will reach the area on the right that we have designated as the Disability Resource Center area. The area is open, not enclosed, and currently has workstations with 6 PCs. The PCs will have adaptive equipment and literacy software similar to what the Rockville Memorial Library offers. They would like input as to the type of equipment and software that should be installed. It was suggested that library staff be trained on the accessible computer equipment and software. The individuals sitting at the PCs will have shelving on the back side of the workstations which will house new books. If you walk past the DRC, you will be in the new book area which has shelving housing the new books as well as lounge chairs and coffee tables that border a long window wall that looks out on the green space that abuts the residential housing on the library building property. There is an open space that is part of the designated DRC area that measures about 8 feet long by 20 feet wide and is directly behind the PC workstations. In that area there are two walls running perpendicular to each other which form the back end of the staff workroom. We currently have shelving showing on both those walls for print resources, but could easily change that to make room for handout displays or other information.

There will be several information points throughout the library where individuals can interact with Staff, as well as roaming staff to assist library patrons. Self check-out stations will be available on every floor.

It was noted that some individuals with disabilities require a distraction free environment and as such an enclosed area might work better for the DRC. It was also suggested that special sound equipment be installed for individuals with hearing impairments.

Commissioners can add additional comments at the next Library Advisory Committee meeting to be held in the next month or e-mail Rita Gale at Rita.Gale@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Equal Rights Center (ERC): Overview of Services – *Kat Taylor, Disability Rights Program Manager, Ian Watlington, Disability Rights Coordinator, and Hilary Tone, Communications Associate, Equal Rights Center*

The ERC began as the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington in 1983. Although the organization began with a focus on discrimination in housing, throughout the years, the organization's mission has evolved and programs have expanded. Joined by the Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington in 1999, the ERC expanded the scope of its programs to include discrimination in both the workplace as well as in public accommodations. In 2005, the ERC expanded again, joined by the Disability Rights Council and its membership, to grow its programs protecting the civil rights of persons with disabilities. Finally, in response to an ever more divisive debate over immigration, in 2006, the ERC introduced its Immigrant Rights Program. Today, the ERC and its members are dedicated to advancing civil rights for all individuals through education, research, testing, counseling, advocacy, and enforcement. It functions as six different programs: education and outreach; development; testing; immigrant rights; fair housing; and disability rights.

Any community member is able to call or use their [online form to submit a complaint](#) or question about discrimination. Trained and qualified ERC staff members respond and offer free counseling and paths to resolution. In addition to counseling, the ERC employs a variety of tools to resolve complaints, including: communicating directly with discriminating parties; advocating before administrative agencies; investigating the extent of issues; or - as a last resource - taking legal actions.

View "Equal Rights Center: Overview of Disability Rights Program" PowerPoint for more information on ERC programs and activities: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/hhs/ads/PDFs/attachmentbercpp.pdf

Jennifer Wolfsheimer, Commissioner, encouraged Commissioners to become testers for the ERC. Testers can have a variety of responsibilities. Some pose as prospective renters, home buyers, job applicants, and more. Other testers are asked to observe and record physical features of a particular store, restaurant, apartment unit, or other public place. Testers take on these various roles for the purpose of gathering information to ensure that individuals or companies are complying with the law and to identify unlawful discrimination.

Jackie Simon, Commissioner, noted that due to ERC's efforts there are now over 15,000 apartments in Montgomery County and the District of Columbia that are now accepting housing choice vouchers or Section 8 certificates. The ERC works closely with the Washing Lawyers Committee, which provides pro bono legal services. They recently negotiated a settlement with Howard University Hospital to make their medical services more accessible.

Chair and Vice Chair Report:

The Commission needs to prepare Top Two Policy Issues to be presented before the County Council on October 6th. One policy issue will focus on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance in regards to the Department of Justice settlement as the Commission as been asked by the County Executive to form a Committee to support this effort. Commissioners will be asked to volunteer and provide feedback on County ADA Compliance efforts. A further discussion will be held at the Steering Committee Meeting on September 21st.

The following outgoing Commission members received Certificates of Appreciation from County Executive Isiah Leggett and were recognized for their service to the Commission:

- Kimberley Alfonso – Commission Member from 2008 - 2011

- Cindy Buddington – Commissioner Member from 2005 – 2011
- Harry Eisenberg – Commission Member from 2005 – 2011
- Ed Kenney – Commission Member from 2008 - 2011
- Paul Meyer – Commission Member from 2008 – 2011
- Jackie Simon – Commission Member from 2005 – 2011

Mary Miers, wife of Commissioner John Miers, accepted a Certificate of Appreciation from County Executive Leggett in celebration and memory of John's outstanding leadership and dedicated service to the Commission. County Executive Leggett extended his thanks and gratitude for helping to make our community a better place to work and live. John served as a Commission Member from 2001 – 2011.

Committee Reports:

Jackie Simon, Commissioner, reported that the Design for Life Montgomery (DFLM) Workgroup met on September 12, 2011. Mark Sucher, Lyons & Sucher Advertising and Marketing, spoke to the Workgroup about developing a marketing strategy for the DFLM program. A marketing strategy outline was developed. An article about DFLM was featured in the fall Building Magazine published by the Maryland National Capital Building Industry Association: "[Design for Life: A Home For All Season](#)" (pages 6 – 7). Jackie also noted that Councilmember Craig Rice's office contacted her and he is preparing legislation regarding DFLM that will be consistent with the Commission's position for a mandatory program.

Mark Maxin, Commissioner, reported that he and Betsy Luecking, Staff, met with Joe Adler to further discuss a Schedule A hiring authority for persons with disabilities. The initiative was established by the Federal Government and allows for qualified candidates who meet the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) guidelines to be hired non-competitively. For a similar regulation to be instituted in Montgomery County, it would have to be put on a ballot and voted on by the public. A petition of 30,000 signatures is required for ballot submission. The Commission was advised that they cannot obtain signatures, although Commissioners could as private citizens or an outside agency could be involved. Inter-ACC/DD was approached about obtaining signatures, but they are unable to provide the staff or support at this time. The deadline for submitting a petition is summer, 2012. The other option is to have the Charter Review Commission approve it to have it put on the ballot. Mark and Betsy will meet with Councilmember Andrews to discuss this issue further.

Charlie Crawford, Commissioner, reported that negotiations with the Department of Transportation continue and progress is being made. Seth Morgan, Commissioner, gave an update on the disability parking meetings he has been attending. He will give a more thorough update at the Steering Committee Meeting. Lucille Baur, Office of Public Information and Staff Liaison to the Department of Police, was asked by Mike Subin to develop a campaign to educate the public about the importance of accessible parking for individuals with disabilities and leaving the spaces available for those that really need them. The campaign will also educate individuals about the importance of disability placards being used by the person who has the disability and that they should not be shared. The concept of the campaign, "Respect the Space", is to show respect for those who need the spaces. There will be opportunities for Commissioners to become involved with the campaign as the County surveys parking lots and spaces to ensure they are adequately signed and marked as well as assesses accessible parking being available to those who need it. A public service announcement is also being developed. Seth will continue to meet with the disability parking workgroup and will report to the Commission once he has more specifics.

New Business:

Seth Morgan, Commissioner, noted that Councilmember George Leventhal introduced [Bill 29-11, Boards, Committees, and Commissions - Sunset, Consolidation and Resolution to Sunset or Repeal Certain Boards, Committees, and Commissions](#). Councilmember Leventhal is exploring possible cuts to the 86 volunteer boards, committees and commissions that cost an estimated \$1.4M in administration costs. Seth made a motion for the Commission to write a letter to the Council stating that Commissions serve a voluntary role and should note the number of volunteer hours that are not calculated or accounted for. Jackie suggested that the

letter acknowledge the legitimacy of Leventhal's concern regarding cost and to make note that CPWD serves a unique role. Cindy added that volunteers are able to offer input from a variety of backgrounds that assist County government in decision making. Mark Maxin seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

Action Item Review: None.

Announcements:

Metro will host a series of five public hearings to receive comment regarding plans to adjust bus service to provide customers with more reliable, efficient and cost-effective service and to provide additional capacity where it is needed most. For dates and locations, view the press release:

www.wmata.com/about_metro/news/PressReleaseDetail.cfm?ReleaseID=5043

[VisionWalk](#), a 5K sponsored by Foundation for the Blind, will be held Sunday, September 25th at the Rockville Town Center. The CPWD will be hosting a table. Trish encouraged Commissioners to attend.

The University of Shady Grove will be hosting [The Power of Words: The Impact of Labels](#), a panel discussion focusing on the power of everyday language to create opportunities for those with disabilities, on Wednesday, October 5th. RSVPs are encouraged, but not required to USG-CIPESRSVP@umd.edu.

The Arc of Montgomery County will be hosting a [Duck Race Festival](#) on Sunday, October 2nd, at The Rio at Washington Center in Gaithersburg. All proceeds will benefit the Arc of Montgomery County.

Community Speaks:

Dr. Steve Coulter, Commissioner, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Advisory Council (AODAAC), introduced himself as the new liaison to the Commission. He will attend future meetings and hopes AODAAC and CPWD can work towards common goals.

Joy Barrow, Medicaid and Senior Transportation Programs, gave an update on the Call 'N' Ride program. The program is moving towards debit cards and will be eliminating the use of paper coupons within the next few months. Individuals who use Call 'N' Ride will need to schedule an appointment to have their photo taken. Appointments can be made by calling 301-948-5409.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, October 12th, 2011 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, MD – Lobby Auditorium, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: ****RESCHEDULED**** Thursday, October 27th, 2011 – 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD – 1st Floor Green Conference Room, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Office Services Coordinator
Betsy Luecking, Disability Policy Specialist